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Written and set in the last years of the nineteenth century, Dracula wrestles with a loss of confidence in how the Victorian British deal with their problems. Stoker's novel challenges the certainty that domesticity, dedication, faith, and science will make right all wrongs. Dracula's protagonists bring all of the Victorians' methods to bear against Count Dracula: science, weapons, medicine, rationality, and temperance. However, even as they take his life, in many ways they fall short of resolving the problems he poses. They kill him by resorting to methods that abrogate the progress of the nineteenth century, and even in death, they know almost nothing about his kind, leaving him as a symbol of all their fears, of the dark unknown that lies just beyond the borders of the civilized world.

This thesis examines the challenges that Dracula poses to late nineteenth century British confidence in Victorian methods and values. I explain how Stoker uses scientific reasoning, documentation, travel, magic and the occult, and sexuality to confront Victorian norms and progress. I show how the novel raises a mirror up to the age, to show its reflection, or lack thereof.

“CHASING AFTER MONSTERS WITH A BUTTERFLY
NET:” THE VICTORIAN APPROACH TO VAMPIRES
IN STOKER’S DRACULA

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER	
I. <u>DRACULA</u> 'S CHALLENGE TO SCIENTIFIC REASONING	1
II. RECORDING AND RECORD-KEEPING	12
III. THE SHORTCOMINGS OF TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGY	25
IV. THE THREATS OF MAGIC AND THE OCCULT	34
V. THE FEAR OF SEXUAL RAMPANCY	41
VI. CONCLUSION	50
REFERENCES	52

CHAPTER I

DRACULA'S CHALLENGE TO SCIENTIFIC REASONING

It is nineteenth-century up-to-date with a vengeance. And yet, unless my senses deceive me, the old centuries had, and have, powers of their own which mere "modernity" cannot kill.

——Jonathan Harker's Journal, Dracula 60

The nineteenth century was a time of substantial advances in science, including Darwin's Theory of Evolution, mechanical and industrial breakthroughs, and developments in chemistry, weaponry, mapping, and recording media. By the end of the century, much of the initial zeal for science and technology was tinted with an increasing shade of skepticism. Count Dracula poses challenges to science and reason on multiple fronts. He is a supernatural being with magical powers, represents old powers and old ways, and survives attempts on his life with every scientific and technological means available. Ultimately, the protagonists bring down the Count, but they do so using the most primitive technologies, and only after all of the scientific and technological methods they try fail. I argue that the failure of these methods represents a late Victorian sense of doubt about the scientific progress present in the late nineteenth century.

The epigraph of this paper comes from one of Jonathan Harker's early journal entries. The passage itself is taken from a journal entry examining the beautiful furnishings and fineries of Castle Dracula, where Harker imagines the history that lies behind the objects he encounters. As he reflects on the castle, he says: "It is nineteenth-

century up-to-date with a vengeance. And yet, unless my senses deceive me, the old centuries had, and have, powers of their own which mere 'modernity' cannot kill" (60). This encapsulates the battle between the forces of late nineteenth-century British 'modernity' on the one hand—science, technology, reason, documentation—and the fears of the British on the other hand, especially the fear that there is something beyond their control. Harker's words express a fear of the "powers" of the "old centuries": mystery, magic, sexuality, the lack of control. He even has a hard time bringing himself to admit these powers still exist, saying that the old centuries "had, and have" such power. In suggesting that the old centuries have a power that modernity "cannot kill," he implies that killing them would be desirable, that the new must kill and replace the old. However the fact that "mere modernity" cannot kill these powers, and the hesitation embedded in Harker's admission they exist show a fear of the old. In an age of reason, the only powers that should exist are those based in logic and rationality. And in an age of reason there are no such things as monsters.

The title of this thesis: "Chasing After Monsters with a Butterfly Net" alludes to the final episode of the science fiction television series The X Files. The show's hero, FBI Agent Mulder, spends nine years pursuing the paranormal using science, rationality, and every method at his disposal. Seeing the failure of his quest, he laments that he has been "chasing after monsters with a butterfly net." That is to say, all his methods have been wholly inadequate for dealing with the forces set against him. The reason I chose the title is that Dracula the novel is an attempt, much like The X-Files, to explore the unexplained. The novel's protagonists try to cross the border between science and the

supernatural, between skepticism and belief. And at the end of the novel, when the protagonists chase after Count Dracula with Winchesters and crucifixes, they are no closer to understanding the “Truth” behind vampires than any of the villagers of Transylvania with their rituals for preventing the evil eye.

The way the characters in the novel deal with the threat of the Count says a lot about how the British saw themselves in this time. The means the protagonists bring to bear against the Count represent the ways in which the British imagined facing their own fear of the unknown. The failure of these means in the novel represents the imagined failure of the same means in real life.

Some of the main methods the protagonists use in their fight against Count Dracula are drawn from the realm of science and rationality. They bring all their technology and all the methods of science and reason to bear against a supernatural villain. They attempt to analyze their situation through the use of scientific method, examining the consequences of different hypotheses and trying to solve the problem of the vampire. They document everything meticulously, trying to record and analyze and understand. They communicate through telegraph wires and mail, and travel in boats and trains, and also bring the latest and greatest personal firearms of the late nineteenth-century. In the end though, each of these rational, scientific, and technological means of dealing with the threat of Count Dracula falls short. After using science and medicine, they resort to garlic and crucifixes. After taking the latest steam trains, their final chase takes place by horse and carriage, and they kill Count Dracula not with a revolver or a lever repeater, but a sword. In every aspect of science and reason, they start with a sense

of confidence, but as they see the shortcomings of their rational methods, their confidence in these methods diminishes.

The characters in the novel also possess a great faith in documentation. Stoker tells the story through the use of various types of documentary materials recorded by the individual characters. These include personal letters, journals, notes, newspaper clippings and telegraphs. The narrative reflects a highly documentary culture, and illustrates the characters' faith that if information is recorded, it improves their understanding and power over a subject. For Mina Murray/Harker, documents offer a way to serve her fiancé. She learns to type and take dictation to advance his career. She also keeps a journal in shorthand, both for practicing her shorthand and also for her own personal use. Jonathan also keeps a personal journal, and claims that he finds it comforting to write down what happens to him, even as the world around him falls apart. As he realizes increasingly that he is a prisoner and in danger in Castle Dracula, Harker writes: "I turn to my diary for repose. The habit of entering accurately must help to soothe me" (60). Documentation serves both a rational purpose, and also as a safety blanket, something into which Harker retreats in a time of weakness, when he needs to comfort and soothe himself.

The protagonists repeatedly employ recording technologies as a part of the process of documentation. For example, Dr. Seward uses a phonograph recorder and Mina uses both her traveling typewriter and shorthand transcription. These devices serve to make the narrative more technological and make the story more novel. Arata cites *The Spectator* as having commented on the novel's "up-to-dateness." This source-based

narrative represents a rational, technical, documentary culture. At the same time, it shows a lack of faith that recording and technology can help defeat mystery and magic. This can be seen when Mina transcribes Dr. Seward's phonograph notes. Seward records his notes on the phonograph machine without realizing that he has no way of accessing the information on a record without listening to the whole thing from beginning to end. Mina transcribes the phonographs so that the information can be accessed more easily (230). This illustrates the promise and the problem of new technology, and also the importance of having access to data. The importance of accessibility is reiterated several times when one of the characters reads documents to catch up on what has happened. This is evident when Van Helsing says, in a letter to Mina: "I have read your husband's so wonderful diary" (196). Thus the science and documentation is useful, but not without qualification.

The novel also utilizes celestial imagery in unscientific ways, amplifying the challenge it presents to the scientific worldview. The Victorians realized that the moon and the stars were bodies of mass whose movements and property could be explained by the laws of physics, as outlined by Sir Isaac Newton two centuries earlier. In the nineteenth century, the beauty and mystery of nature were put under the lens of the science, and found to be explicable. This scientific rationalism caused a backlash among artists and poets. Many believed that a scientific worldview took away from the mystery and romance of the natural world's beauty, especially in the case of celestial imagery that had so long been associated with the mythological (Korg). Victorian literature, especially poetry, often illustrated the conflicts between mystical imagery of the heavens and scientific understanding. By explaining the cosmos and rationalizing the splendor of the

natural world, some perceived science as man's attempt to "unweave the rainbow," as Keats put it. The idea was that by dissecting and explaining the natural world, science missed out on its spiritual and aesthetic qualities. Dracula, with all its science and technology, reverts to magical and supernatural imagery with respect to the heavens. Heavenly bodies become part of the forces of fear and the unexplained. Jonathan's journal describes an encounter with female vampires in terms of swirling magical light: "I began to notice that there were some quaint little specks floating in the rays of the moonlight. They were like the tiniest grains of dust, and they whirled round and gathered in clusters in a nebulous sort of way . . . I was becoming hypnotized" (66). The strange lights in the sky appear in the scene in which Jonathan is attacked by the three female vampires, which are associated with moonbeams. At a low moment, cowed by fear, what should be a rational, scientific worldview falls apart. Count Dracula and the three female vampires do not expose themselves to sunlight, and sleep during the day. The heavenly bodies and their movement have power over when and where the vampires can move, in spite of all their other supernatural powers. What Korg calls the "mythopoetic" association between the heavens and the characters reflects a reversion to the belief in the powers of the sun and moon and stars.

The novel's most explicitly scientific attempt to defeat vampirism is the use of scientific method and medical case studies in the examination and treatment of Renfield and Lucy. Dr. Seward takes notes on these patients using his phonograph, mixing the process of scientific investigation with his personal feelings and observations. This note-taking develops the narrative of the text by fleshing out and personalizing Seward's

character, and it serves to avoid excessively technical analysis. While his notes are not the sort of scholarship presented in modern scientific journals, they follow the principles of science. In writing about nineteenth-century science and literature, Tess Cosslett outlines Victorian scientific values as: truth, law, kinship with nature, organic interrelation, scientific investigation, and contradiction and tensions. Although formal definitions of scientific method have varied over time, and based on the specific field and era, the ethos of scientific method is of an open-minded, systematic, and rational investigation that seeks objective understanding of empirical phenomena. Dr. Seward's notes show that he abides by these principles. He keeps an open mind, documents what he does, and tries to understand problems by isolating variables and considering alternatives. He interrogates his own solutions and seeks the facts of the cases, keeps an open mind, and makes a habit of taking good notes. While his documentation is not scientifically rigorous, it is done in such a way as to be accessible to the novel's audience. The use of semi-formal, and yet lay-accessible scientific documents in the novel reflects a public fascination with science as evident in public journals such as Nature. David Roos describes the parallel development of increasingly professional and specialized scientific journals and lay science journals whose purpose was to educate and involve the British general public. Seward's journal represents just this, a popularized version of scientific note-taking free from the restraints of formal scientific method.

Van Helsing also tries to apply science to an explanation of vampirism. In one particular scene, he goes through a series of speculations on what it is about the Count's particular case which makes him such a powerful vampire. He says: "With this

[vampire], all the forces of nature that are occult and deep and strong must have worked together in some wondrous way” (316). Thus, he identifies the forces that gave rise to Count Dracula as products of nature. Van Helsing continues, describing what it is about Transylvania that made the Count strong: “[Transylvania] is full of strangeness of the geologic and chemical world. There are deep caverns and fissures that reach none know whither. There have been volcanoes, some of whose openings still send out waters of strange properties, and gases that kill and make to vivify” (316). In this, Van Helsing identifies unexplained scientific properties of the earth that he speculates may be related to Count Dracula’s special powers. The description lends a slightly scientific character to what is otherwise entirely supernatural, and suggests that while Van Helsing may not understand exactly how, there is a connection between the forces of nature and the supernatural. When science cannot explain this problem, Van Helsing conjectures, stabbing in the dark with no clear target or direction.

Another aspect of science is learning lessons from experience. Scientists seek trends and attempt to discover their cause. To that end, the lessons the protagonists learn from the study of vampirism add to their understanding of the enemy. When they discover or perceive a trend in vampirism, they seek to exploit it to their advantage. As they come to realize, the Count’s victims have a connection with him, a bond by which they telepathically exchange information. Van Helsing decides that they should make use of the connection between the Count and Mina through the use of misdirection, and through the use of hypnotism. Hypnosis itself is a psychological tool which, for the people of late-nineteenth-century Britain, existed on the boundary between science and

the supernatural. As Van Helsing hypnotizes Mina, they collect intelligence on the Count and his whereabouts, and try to use this information to intercept him. Even with this knowledge, however, the characters are surprised by the speed with which the Count's boat covers the waters to the Dardanelles (330). In this case, they use observations and an experimental technique, but are foiled when the wind favors the Count.

In addition to their rational worldview and attempts at using science to understand Count Dracula, the protagonists utilize modern weapons and transportation. In order to fight him, they must cover a lot of ground, and they ride a lot of trains. Herbert Sussman argues that the people of mid-to-late nineteenth century Britain felt very conflicted about trains as a symbol of progress. He says that in trains Victorians were able to see speed for the first time, to look out a window and see the scenery racing by (10). Trains changed the way the people of the nineteenth-century understood the size of man and the world. Trains shortened distances once thought long and arduous, and they made the farthest places in the world much more accessible, a prospect both profitable and potentially frightening to a culture that both seeks to exploit and also fears non-Europeans. Further, while trains represented a personal convenience, they were seen as a loud, menacing, mechanical nuisance. They produced smoke, noise, and the threat of injury. Even the most positive Victorian literary responses to machines were ambivalent, and showed the dark side of trains alongside the opportunity and promise (Sussman 170). One of the very first images developed in response to the advent of trains is an image of villains tying girls to the tracks, usually with a flesh-and-blood hero saving her at the last minute from a faceless mechanical force of inhuman progress (Daly Literature). There is a similar

sense of conflict about trains within Stoker's novel. The trains and boats take the protagonists great distances with great speed, but in the end of the novel, they race against the Count with horses and a horse-drawn carriage. After all their confidence in technology and science, and after all their methods that failed, they must resort to a primitive technology to face the challenge of the Count.

As the protagonists prepare for their final battle, they bring six-shooters and lever-guns. When preparing to intercept and attack Count Dracula, Quincey declares that they must have repeating rifles. He says: "I propose we add Winchesters to our armament. I have a kind of belief in a Winchester when there is any trouble of that sort [wolves] around" (320). Winchester lever-action repeaters were top of the line for their era. The Winchester model 1894, designed by the famous weapons designer John Moses Browning, has been an American icon for over a hundred years. Although not mentioned by name, it would have been the newest and the best lever rifle model available in the Winchester line, and the first designed for a smokeless powder cartridge, the 30-30. All Winchester repeaters used center-fire cartridges, usually with flat or round-nose bullets, fed through a horizontal magazine tube under the barrel. Their ability to rapidly cycle through many powerful cartridges quickly made them the most desirable short-range weapons of the day. They are handy, light, and easy to carry over open country with a sling, or stow in baggage, especially when compared with larger hunting and combat rifles of the era.

The heroes also use pistols. Quincey uses a revolver to shoot at a bat outside Lucy's window early on in the novel, and even Lucy keeps a pistol in the end to fend off

wolves. Revolvers by the end of the nineteenth-century would have been available in both double and single action. For all intents and purposes, they had evolved mechanically as much as revolvers of the present day. Even if the protagonists were armed with single-action “cowboy” revolvers, as they are now called, they were still armed with a fairly modern repeating pistol. These were excellent weapons for fighting up-close, and capable of rapidly firing all six shots.

So the protagonists in Dracula start with all the most technologically sophisticated personal weapons money could buy, but by the end, the most effective weapons are stakes and knives and swords. The mechanical weapons they use represent modernity and science, engineering and progress. These all fail when trying to defeat the Count, and they must get up close and personal, and must fight him with daggers, holy water, and crucifixes. The novel forces them to abandon from science, reason, and technology and resort back to blades and bibles. To kill the Count, they must abandon their scientific, rational, superior qualities. They lower themselves to the level of primitive man, and in so doing they kill their notions of their place in the world and their scientific superiority every bit as much as they kill Dracula himself. In this way, though they kill him, they become him.

CHAPTER II

RECORDING AND RECORD-KEEPING

In addition to science and scientific reasoning, the protagonists of Dracula use another pillar of British rationalism in their quest to defeat the Count, namely, documentation. Dracula is a composite of narrative textual sources from journals and audio recordings, newspaper clippings, letters, and telegraphs. The novel's protagonists mediate and personally define their experiences through what they write down, often grasping for a sense of control over the world they interact with. Sometimes, rather than merely recording what they see, it is as though they are trying to reassure themselves of their own position and importance in the story; that they were there and that they mattered. The documentary sources are uniquely different, often technical in nature and specific in purpose, but they share a common sense of feigning confidence while grappling with uncertainty. They express a desire to feel greater confidence, to escape the uncertainties of a complex world through writing down what little they actually do know.

In the story of Genesis, God gives Adam one power denied to all others: the power to name each and every thing as he sees it. We have power over that which we can name: the power to contain and control, define and redefine. As Adam could look at a plant or an animal and decide that he knew what to call it, what it was, so too has the West often decided that it can set the terms for the world. The British exercised this power through the recording of words, images, and sounds. Their explorers went to new

continents and invented new names for new peoples. They would shoot and kill new animals, send specimens to museums, and decide their new taxonomies. There is both a sense of power and hubris in writing things down. There is a sense of ownership in putting a label on a map, going to another continent and naming its tallest mountain Everest. There is a sense of ownership in sticking a paper label on a pickle jar with a new African fish, or a label on a board with pinned butterflies, naming a new species after the first white man to catch one. To some extent, the Western traditions of experiential documentation and recording make the assumption that everything can be effectively and empirically recorded and described, that every animal can be collected and put into just the right jar on the right shelf. European mapmakers from earlier centuries drew monsters at the parts of the maps they had not explored, admitting it was dangerous to go beyond the familiar, admitting to their fear of the unknown. Victorian cartographers believed that all the dark spaces on the maps could be charted and filled in, and that all the world's mysteries could be explained and understood. It is the hubris described in Frankenstein (1818) when Victor brings the dead to life, when the sons of Adam think they can play God. This same sense of hubris comes through several times in the documentary narrative of Stoker's novel.

Almost all the characters in the novel keep some form of personal journal or professional documents. The most consistent are Lucy Westenra, Mina Murray/Harker, Jonathan Harker, and Dr. Seward. According to David Seed, these journals all follow a pattern. They begin with rational language, bear a strong focus on evidence and proof, and have a prevailing sense of confidence in themselves. As they progress in dealing with

the paranormal, the rational and scientific qualities of the language devolve into increasing uncertainty. The views the characters hold destabilize, and the language becomes increasingly uncertain. Jonathan's journal is a prime example of this, as it begins with an almost arrogant degree of confidence and rationalism. He believes he can prepare himself for travel by visiting the library and studying maps and books about the region. He also believes he will be capable of making his way around Europe because he has some proficiency in German. As the narrative goes on, it becomes increasingly ominous, as his sense of control declines. Finally, he finds himself writing in his journal for comfort. As he writes when locked in his room: "I turn to my diary for repose. The habit of entering accurately must help to soothe me" (60). The transition from high to low confidence is a result of the challenge that the supernatural poses to nineteenth-century scientific rationalism.

The protagonists begin with a strong faith in rationality, but as the narrative progresses, they find reason to question that faith and it scares them.

In the case of Mina Murray/Harker, her journal begins with both rationality and optimism. The documents she keeps combine female personal narrative with a compositional and editorial role. As her husband's assistant and secretary, she is the closest to being an actual narrator in the novel. She is also the one who supposedly transcribes much of the original source material at her typewriter. Mina manifests a firm faith in the power of documents through her editorial and secretarial roles. She writes to Lucy: "I have been practicing shorthand very assiduously. When we are married I shall be useful to Jonathan, and if I can stenograph well enough I can take down what he wants

to say in this way and write it out for him on the typewriter, at which I am also practicing very hard” (75-6). This account of her efforts attempts to justify the necessity of documentation, and also describes the technical process of recording information. The two major document technologies she introduces from the beginning of her section of the novel are shorthand and typing. These are both means of recording information, and in particular information that someone else has created. In this case, the justification for creating documents is that it will be beneficial to Jonathan’s work. Her secretarial role will help her husband, and allow her to carry her weight in the marriage. However, it is problematic that she is not mostly responsible, as a woman, for the creation of primary documents, but for reinscribing others’ primary documents. While Adam names things, Eve must be content to call them by the names he chooses.

Mina’s documents, and her presence as the silent compiler and typist, raise issues of the significance of gender in nineteenth-century documentation. Pamela Thurschwell’s article “Supple Minds and Automatic Hands: Secretarial Agency in Early Twentieth-Century Literature” considers the cultural and literary significance of the rise of mechanical amanuensis. The main focuses of Thurschwell’s article are the desexing of the act of writing, and the importance of female figures as typists. She describes the growing female presence in the professional world of the mid to late nineteenth century as typists and secretaries, and the meaning and power of transcribing texts. Thurschwell claims that Mina’s typing is indispensable to the story, and also to the narrative form, as she is the one who reproduces most of the texts. Thurschwell also highlights the importance of typing and mechanical source reproduction to the text. In Dracula, this is

especially important for Dr. Seward's audio journal. Seward records his notes on a gramophone, and Mina transcribes the cylinders on a typewriter. In doing so, the information becomes more accessible to the other characters, and also becomes a part of the written record. As the narrative goes, Mina's typing establishes a justification for the presence of the information from the gramophone being present in the novel. To some extent her transcription also serves to belittle the technology of the gramophone; it is advanced technology, and yet the information is inherently difficult to retrieve. Also, while it shows a role for Mina, what she achieves is seeing something that a much more technically and intellectually adept male figure missed. Dr. Seward is the brilliant doctor engrossed in thought, and he keeps notes on the gramophone, but Mina tidies things up and makes his materials more manageable.

Perhaps Mina's power comes through in a different way though, since she is not merely a secretary, but also the one who assembles all the documents at the end of the quest. Since she transcribes and assembles the sources, Mina is the closest thing the novel has to an editor. She is in control of what is included, and she has power over the shaping of the written record. Jennifer Fleissner notes this in "Dictation Anxiety: The Stenographer's Stake in Dracula." Fleissner claims that Mina is the single greatest force in the composition of the narrative, and that this is problematized by her gender. Fleissner claims that the editorial role is a source of power for Mina, whose professional secretarial role is vital to the hunt for the Count, and also vital for the record-keeping. I argue, however, that Mina's power over the information and record of the novel is to maintain a myth. To record something implies understanding, and this is a problem in Dracula

because nobody can understand the Count. The whole time, he remains elusive, a mystery, and the documents of the novel maintain a sense of control. Jonathan's journal gives him a sense of "repose." Mina's role in dictation and amanuensis is to pretend to understand, to fake it. Documents are useful for this because people in control create documents to show their superlative understanding of the subject matter. In this case, Mina is maintaining an illusion of understanding. The characters cleave to documents at times when their confidence collapses because they need to be comforted by the notion that are in command, and that they understand what is happening.

The protagonists also use scientific documents in their fight. Dr. Seward and Van Helsing struggle to understand the scientific principles behind the Count, and they document the process. Their process of investigation in many ways shows them grappling with the Victorian faith in science and professionalism. In Seward's gramophone diary, he keeps notes on the cases of Renfield and Lucy. This is important because it shows his methods, specifically that of case study. Case studies represent a faith in rationalism and science, a belief that there must be an explanation behind every pathology, even the most impenetrable. Documenting is inherent to the process, a part of creating professional, medical evidence. The use of the gramophone affords the additional opportunity to demonstrate a use of a new technology of the day.

Van Helsing's involvement begins when Seward's case study reaches a dead end. Finding himself stumped by Lucy's condition, Seward calls on a personal favor from his old mentor, whom he describes as, "Professor Van Helsing, of Amsterdam, who knows as much about obscure diseases as anyone in the world" (129). From the beginning, Van

Helsing's documents show a keen awareness of his credentials as a doctor and academician. His letter to Dr. Seward is titled: "Letter, Abraham Van Helsing, M.D., D.Ph., D.Lit., etc., etc." (130). This implies a combination of medical, philosophical, and literary knowledge. He is multilingual, and skilled in arcane schools of knowledge. His extensive and obscure professional education is at the core of Van Helsing's broader, and more creative diagnostic ability. Also significant is the fact that he is from Amsterdam, an educated foreigner who bridges the gap between what is English and normal, and what is foreign and strange. The combination of both doctors makes it possible for Stoker to justify the presence of information with which the average reader would not be familiar.

As Van Helsing and Seward's investigation progresses, Seward's confidence declines in the same way that Jonathan's initial confidence in his own skill as a bureaucrat and international traveler declines. Even with his mentor, Seward is at first unable to grasp the source of Renfield's disease, which he thinks of as a form of mental illness. As William Hughes explains in Beyond Dracula, Seward's attempt at rational, scientific analysis leads him to false conclusions in these cases (151). This occurs because the physiological evidence alone does not correlate to any single, conclusive disease on the books. In these cases, the weakness of science is its inability to cope with what is not clearly categorized. With Lucy, Seward must face a more painful task, administering a treatment that was, to say the least, probably not prescribed in medical school, a stake through the heart for the woman he loves. Still, as he feels a loss of confidence in his ability to resolve his patients' problems, or even diagnose them, he maintains his audio journal. The process of creating notes maintains a sense of

professionalism, and allows him to record information about the case, even if he does not understand it at the time.

As a team, Van Helsing and Seward represent the master and pupil of science and reason, two minds brought together to analyze the female body, and to defeat a threat posed to its health and integrity. In his article “Incorporated bodies: Dracula and the rise of professionalism,” Nicholas Daly argues that the main purpose of the narrative is in fact to bring together a homosocial “little band of men,” whose combined specialties and specific types of knowledge combine to defeat the monster. Daly argues that it is their teamwork and specializations that enable the band of men to defeat this threat. Among them, Van Helsing is the first to grasp the threat of the vampire, because of his life experience and wisdom in fields of arcane knowledge. Seward allows himself to be dragged along, serving as the Watson to Van Helsing’s Holmes. In the same way, Seward provides the reader with someone that cannot grasp a fact. This builds suspense, as the reader must keep waiting till Seward gets it. Also, it illustrates the values of Victorian teamwork, assuring the audience that everyone, even down to the lowly secretary, has a part to play. The team cannot defeat the monster by scientific rationalism alone. They must have access to different professionals with different skills.

Also, each specialist must be able to adapt to some extent, to recognize the skills of their comrades. Seward’s treatment of Renfield’s perceived psychiatric disorder illustrates the conflict between scientific rationalism and the supernatural. At the end of the nineteenth-century, psychology was thought to exist at the borderline between science and the supernatural. In Dracula’s Crypt: Bram Stoker, Irishness, and the Question of

Blood, Joseph Valente argues that Renfield's case is largely dismissed initially because his symptoms belonged to a family of mental illnesses which are thought of as exceptionally unmanly, including depression and personality disorders. These illnesses represented "a species of masculine breakdown involving a cluster of nervous disorders classified and treated medically, but identified with a kind of moral incontinence" (123). The notion was that if a man suffered this sort of mental or nervous disorder, his self-sufficiency and ability to function as a rugged individual were compromised, making him a marginal figure. Seward has only a very limited understanding of the possible causes of Renfield's symptoms, because he is reliant on the empiricist model of scientific rationalism with which he is familiar. As Dracula's ship nears England, Renfield becomes animated, and says that the "Master is at hand" (119). Seward narrates: "The attendant thinks it is some sudden form of religious mania which has seized him" (119). This assumption by the attendant of "religious mania" is based on Renfield's language, which seems millenarian and religious. Thus, while Seward's tentative diagnosis is a rational conclusion, it fails to take into account the supernatural force of the Count. Seward dismisses what Renfield says as the babblings of a madman, and has every reason to do so. However, Renfield in the hospital exists on the border between nature and supernature. He is an aspirant to the sort of predation Count Dracula takes part in, but is only at the level of zoophagy, eating lesser animals. The awareness Renfield has of the Count's impending arrival places his condition in the category of supernatural, something that Seward's scientific rationalism has yet to penetrate. The same is evident in his journal in the treatment of Lucy. He is unprepared to deal with what is beyond the scope

of his methods and instruments. Impotent to grasp the great mysteries, he sits in his office and records his thoughts on the gramophone. It is, for him, a form of escape.

Jonathan Harker's journal is the novel's main example of the Count's challenge to Victorian confidence in Britain's bureaucratic and legal systems, especially as they relate to business overseas. On his trip to Transylvania, Harker begins with a supreme sense of belief in Englishness, and a high level of self-confidence. He writes in his journal:

"Having some time at my disposal when in London, I had visited the British Museum, and made a search among the books and maps in the library regarding Transylvania"

(27). He describes the region and its subregions, showing a strong pride in his specific

knowledge of a foreign area, and also manages to denigrate the quality of Transylvania's

maps: "I was not able to light on any map or work giving the exact locality of the Castle

Dracula, as there are no maps of this country as yet to compare with our own survey

maps" (27). He gives an account of the peoples of the region and their history, and shows

an interest in their cultures and languages. In particular, he asks for recipes of all the new

dishes he likes, noting that he wants to make sure Mina can make them for him when he

gets home. This shows his early confidence in his family's ability to replicate an aspect of

another culture, and also a confidence in his position as a man whose wife will cook for

him. This confidence wanes over the first chapters, as he begins to feel an increasing

sense of dread that he does not initially comprehend, but which comes to him in a series

of portents. In spite of his supposed multilingualism, he only understands a smattering of

what people say: "They were evidently talking of me, for every now and then they looked

at me . . . I could hear a lot of words often repeated, queer words, for there were many

nationalities in the crowd; so I quietly got my polyglot dictionary from my bag and looked them out” (31). His confusion is mixed with the unnerving realization that all of the words are related to black magic, including hell, witch, and Satan (32). As his stay at Castle Dracula progresses, Harker realizes he has completely lost control and security and is the prisoner of the Count. His sense of confidence vanishes, and he flees, escaping to the convent. At this point he seeks to reclaim his initial confidence through the last method left to him, the destruction of the Count. This whole process of his loss of confidence and quest to regain it is tightly mirrored in his journal, which is an ever-present part of his identity.

His confidence begins to falter as he finds a great deal about Eastern Europe is unfamiliar and out of the scope of his knowledge. Among the unfamiliar are what he refers to initially as superstitions. At first, he treats the region’s superstitions as a cultural curiosity and point of interest. He says: “I read that every known superstition in the world is gathered into the horseshoe of the Carpathians, as if it were the center of some imaginative whirlpool; if so my stay may be very interesting. (*Mem.*, I must ask the Count all about them.)” (28). His interest in the novelty of these superstitions turns to an increasing sense of unease as he witnesses the locals’ responses to his planning to see Count Dracula. They keep crossing themselves, and referencing what seems an unnamed fear. Harker’s ultimate crisis of faith seems to come as he realizes how much more the Count knows about England and Englishness than Harker knows of Transylvania.

Stephen Arata describes the encounter with the Count as a case of reverse colonization. Arata examines what he sees as a Western fear of being overtaken and

colonized by a stronger race, in this case the vampire as a substitute for colonized peoples. Arata says of this that “Jonathan Harker’s initial journey to Castle Dracula is a travel narrative in miniature, and the opening chapters in his journal reproduce the conventions of this popular genre” (635). He further notes that this normal pattern is disrupted, claiming that it “calls into question the entire Orientalist outlook” (635). However, I contend that the loss of confidence and the failure of Harker as a colonial figure is less of a challenge to British colonialism per se, and more of a challenge to the values such as science and rationality. The novel focuses on how Victorian confidence becomes unhinged by encounters with the unexplained. Count Dracula may, to some extent, represent a racial force, but is more immediately a force of magic, something that cannot be named and understood.

In “Saved by Science? The Mixed Messages of Stoker's Dracula,” Rosemary Jann argues that the conflict between science and mystery is a core theme of Dracula, but that science and rationalism are ultimately affirmed. She is correct to say that a band of specialists, using all the technologies of the day, destroy Count Dracula and break the curse on Mina. Although it is true that the heroes, with the help of science, manage a temporary victory over the supernatural, it is also true that the mystery behind the creature persists after his death. Recording the events in what seems superficially to be a rational and scientific and professional way is a means of covering up what is still unknown.

Scientific rationalism is only truly victorious over what it can explain, what it can place in a reference book in the library, and box up in a display case at the British

museum. Documentation, when victorious, must fully explicate the subject matter. Something that is not fully understood and fully explained cannot be subject. At the end of Dracula, the nature and mechanics of the supernatural are still mysterious and elusive, and the effects that the creature has had upon the crew remain, including multiple exchanges of blood, the deaths of several characters, and the realization that there is no hold over what has happened. Far from reassuring, the ending leaves open the fact that there could easily be more nests of vampires beyond the borders of England, and that the knowledge of the British is limited and flawed. This is where documents become a safety blanket, a place of repose and escape from a harsh reality they do not want to face. Thus while they may start with the confidence of Adam, the lords of the world fit to name all they see, in the end they crawl into their journals like children to their beds, fearing the monsters that may come.

CHAPTER III

THE SHORTCOMINGS OF TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGY

Dracula also illustrates a late nineteenth-century questioning of the British faith in travel and transportation technology. The colonial enterprise led the British to see themselves as masters of travel and distance. The Victorians said that the sun never set on the British Empire. To control such a large domain, they had to be a nation of travelers. Dracula exploits and challenges this sense of dominion over global distance, fed both by maritime imperialism and of nineteenth-century technologies. The novel uses maps, travel, space and distance to cause the British characters and audience discomfort, both at being unable to dominate these fields and also at seeing a force from far-off skilled enough to use them to advantage, and to make it to their home turf. The modes and technologies of travel in the novel illustrate a late nineteenth-century British obsession with moving across distance, including the use of documentary technologies and guidebooks, as well as with trains themselves. The novel is filled with the characters' attempts at knowing when and where and how they can cover distance, a desire for knowledge that can empower the British characters as a traveling people.

Vampirism, for all its mystery, is most thoroughly rooted in one particular place. Stoker creates in Transylvania a place of otherness, distinct from the British sense of normalcy. To start the reader off, Stoker makes Britain into the world of daylight, where everyone knows monsters dare not tread. In the first pages, Harker discusses having spent

time in anticipation of his trip, going to the British Museum and the library. Mina starts off communicating in letters about Lucy's suitors and marriage prospects. She writes about Jonathan and their future, her ambitions, her new skills. Nothing is dark or negative. Transylvania is far away and unknown, a closet in the dark. When Jonathan arrives, there is an escalating sense of foreboding in the text, and he increasingly realizes that he is a prisoner, and that he will likely die. Being so far from home, and in such an unknown place, opens up possibilities for the audience. It makes it easier to suspend disbelief when dark forces come to Britain. The novel summons fears of reverse colonialism, the fear that as the British develop the means to bring themselves closer to their client peoples, that the other peoples of the world will similarly have greater access to the British homeland.

Mary Louis Pratt describes the eighteenth century as the time of transition for Europe from maritime to interior exploration. She describes a worldview of "anti-conquest," wherein white knowledge and travel can become a form of patronizing domination, pretending to innocently expand the world of objective knowledge while going on journeys of exploration with latent and ulterior motives of economic imperialism (38). Having found and charted the coasts of the world, European knowledge-makers and cartographers went inland to discover the interior. In the late eighteenth century and the nineteenth they seek to fill in the blank spaces between the coasts, as Marlowe says in *Heart of Darkness*. Like Marlowe, something drew explorers to these last mysterious blank spaces, an unnamed desire to see unknown lands, perhaps to be the first white man to plunge their flag into the last unnamed, unclaimed stretch of

virgin earth. In spite of all the studies and exploration that were accomplished in the intervening years, the people of late nineteenth-century Britain still had a need to believe in someplace beyond, a closet into which their public imagination could place its grown-up monsters.

I contend that this is one of the main reasons for the use of exotic locations at the interior of far-away lands such as Transylvania in Dracula and Central Europe and the South Pole in Frankenstein. For Frankenstein, the settings in Central Europe reduce the difficulty of believing that man, at the intersections of science and alchemy, could find a way to raise the dead. Similar treatments are evident in the Western imagination of what is possible in Robinson Crusoe (1719), and The Island of Dr. Moreau (1896). In Robinson Crusoe, the white character has the opportunity to create his own little empire of rationality and technology amid the savage, primitive settings, imaginatively offering the opportunity for the British to reaffirm their faith in the power of knowledge and reason over the primitive and undeveloped. In Dr. Moreau, a scientist who works beyond the bounds of restraints present in the civilized world reaches the outer limits of what is possible, creating a new world with his own version of the modern Prometheus. In all these cases, an exotic location removes the reader from a normal world of possibility and impossibility. A new setting sets new rules and reduces the normal threshold for the suspension of disbelief.

In creating both a foreign locus and a populace, Dracula makes it easier to get away with creative license, and also creates a greater sense of mystery. Foreignness in a character creates an opportunity for an interesting and exotic back-story, something

outside the British quotidian experience. The character can be made more unusual, more special. Foreign characters can also do things that proper British gentlemen cannot. An example is the character of Count Fosco in The Woman in White (1860), who has far more complexity and strangeness than the British characters in the novel. Another example can be seen today in Hannibal Lecter, a character largely unbelievable, made more palatable to the audience through his background as an Eastern European nobleman whose family were brutally killed in World War II.

Exotic foreignness is also evident in Van Helsing. Being Dutch, he is connected with Continental Europe. He is an old man of arcane knowledge, a polyglot educated from countless founts of obscure readings, not limited to the information that the average British male would learn. Similarly, Quincey is American. To the British, this means that he is a frontiersman, a passionate, athletic man with a pistol and a bowie knife who has been through wilderness and danger. He also has skill with a horse, and can cover ground quickly. The people of Romania are also identified as having a great deal more arcane knowledge than the British. Though the British characters often belittle this as merely superstition, the Romanians identify the communion wafer burn on Mina's forehead immediately as a mark of evil, and ritualistically protect themselves from the Evil Eye. The desire of the British characters to write off this intuitive understanding belies a belief in the superiority of their Western rationalism, but at the same time reveals the wavering of that faith. The mysterious Romanians afford the opportunity to frighten the British characters with the possibility that there are people in the world that know more than they do.

As empire expanded, and as railroad tracks spread across the globe, distances shrank. Space once thought virtually impenetrable became a short sojourn. It was possible to ride through time zones in frigid climes with the comfort of a wet bar and a warm bed. Ships increasingly ran under the power of steam, with the promise that someday it may do away with sails. The British Empire had easy access to all the peoples and customs of the world. As they gained the power to readily move from place to place, they sent out governors and advisors to bureaucratically manage their empire. British authority was built on a paternalistic sense of superiority and knowledge. They believed that the peoples of the world were incapable of ruling themselves. Colonial subjects did not know what was in their own interest; only the British did. As the world grew smaller, the people in it grew to need less intervention and control. The natives got uppity, and they were armed.

The British characters in the novel always need to believe in the validity of their own knowledge, especially in regard to travel. They have a need to believe that their knowledge gives them an advantage. They study maps and travel materials and obsess over information on trains and boats, memorize train schedules, and read telegraphs and logs of journeys. Both Mina and Jonathan learn the schedules of trains from Lloyd's, a train schedule book. Mina describes her interest as such: "I am the train fiend. At home in Exeter I always used to make up the time-tables, so as to be helpful to my husband. I found it so useful sometimes, that I always make a study of the time-tables now" (333). The British have faith that the civilized world keeps schedules and appointments, and that the trains must always run when the books say they should. They are upset when this

order is violated, as it is a breach of the life of systematic order on which they have come to rely. Yet in Dracula, these symbols of order and civilization fall apart. The trains in the East do not run on time, and they are thwarted by the insufficiency of train travel in the pursuit of Count Dracula. All the memorization of schedules in the world cannot make the trains arrive on schedule when they are behind, or when they do not exist.

Just as the trains are critical to a British sense of normalcy and order, so too are the boat, horse, and carriage thematically important to the novel. Each type of travel gives the protagonists specific advantages and capabilities, and each has its own symbolism. The train is the peak of civilization and technology. It is mechanical, technological, and capable of extreme consistency, speed, and reliability. The train is modern, and it has both the promise and menace of technology. Boats, on the other hand, are of the age of maritime colonialism, a technology thousands of years old. Boats traditionally rely on the wind, and are more subject to the elements than trains. As such, there is more nature and superstition associated with boats. The captain at the helm chooses which way to turn, rather than going straight on a fixed track. Sailors have countless superstitions about wind and weather from the ages that man spent at sea. The use of the train in the pursuit of Count Dracula, as he lies in the belly of a sailboat, should be the triumph of modernity over the ancient mariner's technology. In theory the British should easily outpace Count Dracula's ship as it moves through the Mediterranean and they move over land. In point of fact, however, their trains fail them, both because of bad fortune in train scheduling and because of the superior wind that mysteriously propels the Count's ship. For them, it is a letdown. It is a time when superstition and magic thwart

technology and civilization. When the *Czarina Catherine* passes through Gibraltar in the fog, and when it passes through the Dradanelles to Galatz with great speed, these occurrences are attributable to natural phenomena beyond the control of man. The captain of the ship, however, believes them to be the result of magic. He says: "It's no canny to run frae London to the Black Sea wi' a wind ahint ye, as though the Deil himself were blawin' on yer sail for his ain purpose" (341). Captain Donelson goes on to describe the great concern the Romanians on his ship had over Count Dracula's box, that they wanted to throw it overboard out of a belief that it was cursed. Thus, once again, the Romanians are set up as a magical people, and once again their suggestion is belittled and ignored by a British character.

When the protagonists find that they have to catch Count Dracula overland, and there is no way to use a train, they choose horses as a last resort. Just as the symbolism of the train is modernity, and the boat is superstition and mystery, the horse is a symbol of vitality, strength, courage, and of older times and traditions. The characters that ride horses are Godalming, Quincey, and Harker, the three youngest men. Van Helsing and Mina ride in a carriage, taking a different route. Quincey in particular is an excellent rider, a part of his image as an American cowboy. He has recently been riding a great deal with Godalming in South America. The manly skills of riding, living outdoors, and chasing the Count, prove their physical prowess. After the mystery of the wind beats the modernity of the train, it is only through primitive strength that they can challenge Dracula. When Beowulf challenges Grendel, he has a fine, well-honed sword, which is the best technology of the age. Yet when he fights the beast, his sword fails him and he

must grapple with his bare hands. The band of men in Dracula resort to their blades when their guns cannot kill the Count. In the same way, when all the things in which they have confidence fail—science, reason, technology— they resort to the most primitive and personal of transportation, the bond of horse and rider. It is the use of a primitive animal, and the primitive strengths of man that challenge the Count the most, and in their contest with Count Dracula, the horse is the transport of last resort, but it is also the only way they can catch him.

The Count challenges Britishness. Count Dracula forces the protagonists to get down in the mud and fight. He thwarts their technologies, and breaks their expectations. They have faith that they can rely every day on trains, and yet the Count can outpace trains with a mysterious, otherworldly wind behind his sails. They believe they can effectively track the Count through the use of telegraphs and logs of the movements of ships, and yet simple fog can veil the sea. They believe that they can schedule fast, efficient travel, and yet they find that there are parts of the world where money cannot buy train service, where they have to mount a horse and ride. The classic chase is what ensues when technologies of transport, mapping, and communication fail. To match the Count, the protagonists must resort to fighting dirty, and it isn't knowledge or wisdom, or colonial superiority or the stiff upper lip, but horses, crosses, and a bowie and a kukri knife that kill the Count. As he kills Dracula, the gentleman in his fine coat must rip off the façade of civilization and reveal the barbarian within. Perhaps this is why it is Quincey who must sacrifice his life. As an American, he takes upon himself the sin of being more uncivilized than the others. For them, riding horses and fighting wild men is

extraordinary, but for Quincey it is par for the course. Thus in his death, perhaps he becomes the sacrifice, and takes the guilt of the group for losing their composure and refinement.

CHAPTER IV

THE THREATS OF MAGIC AND THE OCCULT

Dracula challenges the notion of nineteenth-century progress by showing the failures of specific advances, such as travel technologies or technologically sophisticated weaponry. The novel also challenges progress through the very presence of vampires. Stoker's use of magic and the occult defies British nineteenth-century rationalism. In an age where the light of science shined broad and bright, Count Dracula symbolizes the legacy of what remained in the shadows, an enduring fear of the unsolved mysteries of the world. In an era where it seemed as though natural science could solve all the world's problems, the Count was something else, supernatural.

The people of late Victorian England had a love-hate relationship with magic and the occult. The nineteenth century saw an increase in scientific discovery and accumulated empirical knowledge. At the same time, the British belief in national folklore and Christian mythology gave way to widespread belief and interest in parapsychology and the paranormal. There were parallel religious revivals and atheist movements. People increasingly focused on justifying what had been seen in the past as superstition, with many scientific studies done on phenomena such as séances and apparitions (Noakes). People would rap on tables to hear answers from dead relatives. Parapsychology and the paranormal became fields of study, legitimated by an interested public, including members of high society. New ways of thinking about magic

superceded the old. Roger Luckhurst explains that paranormal studies tried to turn the supernatural into the “supernormal” by creating scientific terms such as phantasmagoric and telepathic (197). Rather than merely believing in magic as a point of faith, experts tried to reconcile science and a belief in rational empiricism with magic and the occult. They tried to place magical forces into the purview of natural phenomena.

In Dracula, the same complex of science and the supernatural manifests itself in the protagonists’ approach to vampirism. When Lucy is infected, they initially treat her pathology in a medical, scientific way. They diagnose her with weakness, and try all their normal treatments. When Van Helsing becomes involved, he brings in the novel and mysterious technique of transfusion, which at that time was thought of as more of an art than a science. This treatment itself had a complex history, blurring the boundaries between empiricism, arcane knowledge, medicine, and alchemy. Many of the early experiments in transfusion were carried out in Holland, France, and England in the seventeenth century using animal blood. Often the assumption was that specific perceived characteristics of a species of animal could be transfused into the patient, such as the gentleness of a lamb. The nineteenth century saw an increasing experimentation with blood transfusions, but the process was not fully understood until well into the twentieth. Doctors of the nineteenth century focused on transfusing blood from and to humans, but the methodologies used were still based on poor scientific understanding of human blood types and circulation (Van Lieburg).

Rather than being strictly scientific in the modern sense of the word, the novel’s explanation of transfusion focuses on the notion of transferring vitality from characters

that have it to Lucy, who needs it. Out of this way of thinking, Van Helsing's treatments increasingly resemble the magic and symbolism of the vampires' own predation. Count Dracula and his minions drink the blood of the innocent, thereby extending their own lives. Van Helsing's technique attempts to transfer the health and strength of a healthy patient to one that is weak and sick, also extending their life. Quincey comments on this: "Then I guess, Jack Seward, that that poor pretty creature that we love has had put into her veins the blood of four strong men. Man alive, her whole body wouldn't hold it" (165). As their treatment of Lucy progresses, it becomes clear that traditional medical techniques, and even new and radical medical techniques, such as blood transfusions, will not be sufficient for making Lucy better. With Van Helsing on the case, the treatment of Lucy evolves from the scientific toward the mystical.

Van Helsing treats Lucy with garlic, and he and Dr. Seward wait by her side as she grows weaker and dies, at which point Dr. Seward says comments that she finally has peace. Van Helsing turns to him and says "Not so, alas! Not so. It is only the beginning!" (174). His cryptic comment is, of course, a prelude to a cryptic scene. Now entirely outside the realm of traditional science, they prepare to deal with Lucy's undead body, to cleanse it of vampirism and free her soul. Throughout his dealings with these matters, Van Helsing always knows more than he says, helping Stoker build suspense. He orders Dr. Seward to bring post-mortem knives. "Must we make an autopsy?" Seward inquires. "Yes, and no," he answers (176). As he explains, he intends to cut out her heart and cut off her head. Dr. Seward objects: "Why mutilate her poor body if there is no need? And if there is no necessity for a post-mortem and nothing to gain by it—no good to her, to us,

to science, to human knowledge” (177). However, Van Helsing still insists that he knows something Dr. Seward does not. He does not explain what it is.

Van Helsing’s clues about his secret knowledge serve to build suspense toward the crypt scene, but the good doctor Van Helsing also illustrates the role of training and experience of arcane matters. He is a figure who bridges the gap between the British and scientific, and the arcane and magical. He is from Amsterdam, a center of knowledge in Continental Europe. Yet he speaks and reads English almost as well as a native. He is a doctor and professor, and yet in addition to his traditional medical knowledge, he has clearly built a body of experience in matters such as vampires. Van Helsing’s knowledge often remains hidden, and its origins elusive. As he explains to his protégé, Dr. Seward: “I know it was hard for you to quite trust me then, for to trust such violence needs to understand; and I take it that you do not—that you cannot—trust me now . . . And there may be more times when I shall want you to trust when you cannot—and must not yet understand” (181). As a character, Van Helsing leads the other protagonists, and the reader, into an increasingly improbable and unscientific world. He is versed in knowledge that is hidden or occluded, the root of the word occult; and he hoards this knowledge from the others until he is sure they are ready to see it. He rations out small portions of his secret understanding of vampirism, but only he seems to grasp the big picture. He is their guide through darkness, and also serves through his mysterious, Old World quality, to bring the battle to Dracula’s own terms.

The other elusive aspect of Van Helsing’s hidden knowledge is the problem of where it comes from. Van Helsing is a learned man. He has read many books, studied

many cultures and languages and disciplines, but how is it Van Helsing managed to learn of vampires? Did he learn from some master of lore in a university? The quickness and sense of mental preparedness with which he addresses the vampire problem once the other options are exhausted creates a strong sense in the novel that he has past experiences. The closest he comes to unveiling the source of his knowledge of the matter is when he says to Dr. Seward: "Before we do anything, let me tell you this; it is out of the lore and experience of the ancients, and of all those who have studied the powers of the Un-Dead. When they become such, there comes with the change the curse of immortality; they cannot die, but must go on age after age adding new victims" (221-22). He references sources of information, but they are obscure, the lore and experience of ancients and experts. This reinforces the fact that there have been other undead enemies, and the possibility that he himself may have been one of those who "studied the powers of the Un-Dead." He is possessed by a strong sense of purpose, which he seems to draw from more than just knowledge of lore or legend. Stoker begs the question of whether or not Dracula is the first and only vampire that Van Helsing has dealt with personally. It may be that long ago in his youth, he was inducted into the world of magic and vampires in the way that he is introducing Dr. Seward. If Van Helsing learned from someone else that the head vampire must be killed to eliminate a group of them, then it goes to reason that someone else must understand vampires, and therefore must have taken down a group of them in the past. For such specific lore to exist about techniques, and for there to be fields of study on vampire-hunting, there must have been multiple vampires, and many hunters too. Van Helsing acts with the determined certainty of a man who has done just

that. This is evident in the text through both the purpose and solemnity with which he reassures the others of what they must do.

The crypt scene and Lucy's resurrection also raise the issue of bringing back loved ones. It was one of the key beliefs of Victorian spiritualism and supernaturalism that a group of people could call up the dead. It is also, of course, a Christian tenet that a person's soul can be resurrected. The Victorian was characterized by a strong belief in spirits, and the ability to bring them back to communicate with the living (Luckhurst). The interest was in the ability to communicate with a loved one's uncorrupted spirit, the loved one as they were. Stoker's novel poses a challenge to this desire. Instead of bringing back the spirit, vampirism brings back only the body. The body, changed and infected, is now no longer the loved one, but a mockery of the living individual, and doomed to serve in eternity as a slave to the Count. The absolute sense of servitude is clear in the character of Renfield, for whom Count Dracula is a godlike being, a master who must be served. Renfield wishes nothing more than to give himself completely to the Count, and loses his mind. Thus, while Dracula remains a strong, sensible, intelligent being, he turns his male converts into broken, senseless victims. He also turns the female bodies he resurrects into his harlots. They become resurrected bodies, forced to live a life of predation against the living, especially children. Also, they are highly sexualized, and it is strongly indicated that the Count uses them for his sexual gratification. This supposition can be drawn in part from the sexualized act of fluid exchange that originates their disease, and also by the fact that Dracula himself keeps three female vampire servants, and Lucy, but is never seen taking a male as a permanent slave.

Count Dracula's supernatural qualities are a particular threat to Victorian sexual morality because they violate the notion of the purity of womanhood. His powers and his supernatural qualities are sexual in nature. Most of his targets are women. Through the sexualized magical powers he possesses, he turns female victims over to his side. They become vampires, and totally bound and committed to him. They become unclean. This resurrection of a sexualized body represents a violation of the Victorian ideals of female sexuality as pure and dedicated to procreation in marriage at the same time it brings up the horrors of corpse violation and a national cuckoldry. Symbolically, as he violates Britain's women, he violates Britain herself. The supernatural sexual characteristics of Count Dracula force the Victorian reader to realize their worst fears about sex with corpses and the sexualization of British women at the same time.

The supernatural qualities of the Count are what make him a continuing threat. The Victorian solutions for a natural and physical threat fall short when dealing with a supernatural one. Jonathan Harker tries the British colonial approach to dealing with Count Dracula, treating him as a client and using him to make money. Quincey uses what could be called the American approach, guns. Dr. Seward tries science, and Dr. Van Helsing uses magic and science hybrid method. Even still, these solutions may end one vampire, or even a nest of them, but it does not get at the root of the problem: there is something beyond the grasp of the rational, scientific world. There is something lurking in the shadows, and it cannot be explained away, or shot.

CHAPTER V

THE FEAR OF SEXUAL RAMPANCY

Just as the novel's failures of science, reasoning, technology and documentation play to British fears of the inadequacy of progress, the Count's sexuality plays to nineteenth-century British fears of sexual excess. Count Dracula has the power to take women against their conscious will, perform a sexual and magical act with them, and convert them into vampires. The Count is a foreign, supernatural being who performs a monstrous sex act with English women whose husbands are symbolically impotent. The act of vampirism is an exchange of bodily fluids, it is performed heterosexually, by one gender on the other; it occurs at nighttime, and most often it involves the desecration of young girls who, in the end and against their conscious intentions, submit. The act of vampirism when executed upon the novel's respectable women is close to being an act of rape. She submits, but is in an altered state, under a spell. When enacted upon males, it is a sexualized act performed by female vampires, which draws life from them and weakens them as men. Against males it is an act of female sexual dominance that inverts gender roles.¹ It is in this way a sort of horror story of supernatural ravishment.

¹ Marilyn Francus' article "The Monstrous Mother" identifies a consistent theme throughout British and Western literature of female monstrosity associated with predation. Specifically, the monstrous female draws the life from a male character through sex. With excessive sex, it was believed that the male character lost his virility and became weaker. She cites the notion of the little death, that each ejaculation took a piece of a man's life away (829-32). I believe this is also similar to the myth of the succubus, a sexual female monster who takes the life force of men.

The Count's sexuality is intertwined with his magic. He is a corpse, but he is alive, and can take different forms. His true appearance is sexually unappealing. In fact, the Count is wretched and frightening, as Jonathan Harker witnesses during his stay at Castle Dracula: "There, in one of the great boxes, lay the Count! He was either dead or asleep . . . I saw the dead eyes, and in them, dead though they were, such a look of hate" (70). The description of him is of a monstrous, half-dead man, so terrifying that Jonathan flees because of the look in his eyes. He is also variously associated with creatures thought of as vermin, such as wolves and bats, creatures which appear to come out of nowhere, as if through spontaneous procreation. Thus it is not his innate beauty and appearance that give him sexual power, but his illusion, his power to change. He sneaks into girls' rooms in the night and places a spell on them. Count Dracula's unexplainable magical powers give him the ability to seduce and entice, to put girls to sleep. However, there is a dearth of specifics on what he does with them; much of the process of this is left to the imagination of the reader. The closest the novel comes to a complete description of vampirism is Jonathan Harker's account of being seduced by the female vampires. In this, he says that he was unsure how much of it was reality, or whether it was all a dream.² The vampires manifest a power of seduction, to dull the senses somehow and induce complacency. At one point in the novel, this state is observed by unaffected outsiders. This occurs when Quincey, Arthur, Van Helsing, and Seward storm into the room where Count Dracula is forcing Mina to feed on his blood. Both Jonathan

² He confirms that the events were real when he sees the Count with the bag he had used to abduct the baby, and when the mother of the stolen baby comes to challenge the Count and is attacked by wolves (67-68).

and Mina are in the room, and both are in a state of dullness and stupor, from which they take some time to recover afterwards (283-84).

It is important that all of the vampiric exchanges in the novel occur between males and females. Dracula himself only takes female victims in Britain, and there is no evidence in the text that he personally victimizes Jonathan Harker or Renfield by the exchange of blood. The exception to the rule of opposite gender victimization is the consumption of the baby at Castle Dracula and the taking of the babies in London. Jonathan recollects, from a dreamlike state, being in his room with Count Dracula's three female servants. Dracula returns, finds the three she-vampires preparing to feed on Jonathan, and forces them to leave him alone. He then gives them a squirming, weeping bag which seems to contain a baby. At this point the she-vampires flee with the baby, and presumably drink its blood. The taking of babies is the only act of vampiric predation with no apparent sexual undertones, but it does show a total abjuration of the process of reproduction through sex. The killing of the baby and the consumption of its life is not sexualized, but does show the genitive aspect of empowering the vampires through predatory behavior and violence. Christopher Craft points out that as the protagonists find Lucy with the baby, she is clutching it to her breast to feed upon it. Craft claims that the act of taking the child to her breast as she feeds upon it is a monstrous form of inversion from the role of sexual womanhood as nurturing (120). Instead of female sexuality nourishing the next generation by lactation, monstrous female sexuality feeds on them. The blood is the life, and their lives are extended through drinking it. As disgusting as it

is, the eating of the baby drives home the fact that the productive or reproductive sexual element of vampirism is entirely predatory.

The scene where the female vampires seduce Jonathan Harker is the most overtly sexual part of the novel. Jonathan's recollection of it is as the memory of a dream, and he is unsure if it is real, but he remembers their gathering around him, preparing to give him "kisses" (61). He describes them in exquisitely sexual detail, and writes that he is ashamed if Mina should read this part of his journal, but feels he must write nonetheless. He says repeatedly that they are voluptuous and that he is attracted to them. The she-vampires whisper and laugh to one-another, surround him and prepare, apparently, to take their turns at biting his neck. He says: "I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips" (61). He describes them and their acts in very sexual terms: "The fair girl advanced and bent over me till I could feel the movement of her breath upon me. Sweet it was in one sense, honey sweet, and sent the same tingling through my nerves as her voice" (61). Jonathan focuses on their mouths, which are repeatedly described as red lips with bright, pearly teeth. This emphasis combines titillation, and possible implications of what could be called nontraditional sex—specifically oral sex—with a sexual threat of vampirism. The threat of an act of violence is combined with the anticipation of a pleasurable act of "kisses." Craft notes that in sexualized literary encounters with monsters, the pattern of behavior of the victim is to invite the monster, to enjoy the monster, and then to reject or overthrow the monster (107). This is a cycle of discipline and self-denial which he links with a displaced homoeroticism. I believe that the novel buries more of a general and heterosexual theme

of denial. Jonathan's resolve may not have been fully tested against the she-vampires, since the Count intervened. Nonetheless, he fights to escape, seeking to return to his wife rather than to give in to them.

The threat posed by these female vampires is that they have the power of dominant sexual partners. Theirs is a strong sexuality, a power to seduce combined with the mystique of magical entities, terrifying and alluring. They take control of Harker. Yet at the same time Dracula easily overpowers them, driving them aside and delivering to them a baby as a pittance for denying them their main prize. Their relations with Harker show Jonathan's weakness before them, alongside Dracula's strength. Damion Clark argues that Count Dracula's sexual power is meant to portray Oscar Wilde, and to induce homosexual panic in the Victorian male readers (171). He claims that the sexualization of strong female characters makes them masculine, and therefore turns heterosexual relations into relations that are symbolically homosexual. I believe that claims of homosexual or homoerotic themes are misplaced. This sexual dominance and power of Count Dracula is not a demonization of homosexuality, but an ambivalent treatment of excesses in heterosexuality. The Count is a character with multiple female partners, none of whom is his legitimate wife. The female and male vampiric sexuality are heterosexually enacted, and done to an extreme. Vampirism is a threat of the loss of conscious control and restraint, the threat of a loss of temperance. It also ties in with themes of sexual dominance and submission, which is a way in which the novel plays with gender roles. Whereas the traditional gender norm is of the obedient wife and the

temperate husband, Dracula plays with female domination of males, male intemperance, and a surfeit of partners and sexualized activity.

What Damion Clark's article does effectively tap into is the fact that the sexual threat from Dracula is compounded by the problem it poses to English manhood. The threat to English masculinity is manifold. Count Dracula performs sexual acts with the young women of Britain, converting Lucy and infecting Mina. He contaminates their pure bodies with his foreign, monstrous sexual quality, and turns them into monsters as well. The Count proves that the British males are either impotent to satisfy or to protect their wives. Count Dracula's sexuality serves as a form of national cuckoldry, and could just as easily represent a virile male competitor, or even a pimp, as he could a homosexual threat. He is strong, and the British men in the novel are comparatively weak. He has his way with women, and they come to dominate men thereafter.

There are three men in particular who are in some way emasculated by the Count: Renfield, Jonathan, and Arthur Holmwood. In Renfield's case, this comes through his psychological state. He cannot function as a man, and must be hospitalized for mental illness. In the late nineteenth century his condition was thought of as a form of unmanliness (Valente). Arthur is ineffective as a lover. He is a rich man who marries Lucy, a younger, more virile woman. He is not a strong character, and exists for his wife as more of an economic safety and titleholder than a sexual partner. Also, he leaves his wife alone while he goes off on an adventure for some time with another of her former suitors, Quincey. He is essentially cuckolded by Dracula, as the Count manages to engage his wife in vampirism and converts her. Jonathan is similarly a symbolic cuckold. Weak

and emasculated, he stays in the castle as a victim of Dracula's female minions until he scrapes up the wherewithal to escape, and then as he convalesces he is too weak to initially respond to the victimization of his wife and Lucy. He is even present in the room, and yet kept in a stupor as his wife is victimized (283).

As the Count makes his way to England, he takes with him the power to create new vampires. He cannot breed new life, but has the power to infect the living. The contagious quality of vampirism and the sexualized act of blood-drinking conjure images of sexual disease. Much like a venereal disease, vampirism is passed through a fluid exchange. This act is sexual in nature, and the result of the conversion is an increase in sexuality and desire. The disease comes not through procreative, marital relations but through a nontraditional sex act involving a foreigner, which takes the place of procreative sex. Vampirism, however, is simultaneously associated with converting the victim into a vampire through the pollution of the blood, thus the act of vampiric predation is both sexual and genitive. A person is reborn through being bitten, and through biting. The sex act does not result in pregnancy or reproduction, and the taking of the baby at Castle Dracula displays the horror of vampirism in this regard. However, through their sexualized actions, vampires live forever. Sex as reproduction may allow people to live on through subsequent generations, but vampirism is a sexualized act that affords the participants eternal life.

Because of the exchanges of blood, and because of the foreign origin of vampirism, the disease-like aspect of the Count is also symbolically linked to the threat and fear of miscegenation. When a person exchanges blood with vampires, their own

blood is polluted by contact with a foreign form of blood. They become hybridized, just as Transylvania is described as a hybridized nation, and just as the Count possesses currencies from many nations, and has items in his castle from the distant past. Sos Eltis asserts that there was a widespread fear of both sexual and racial degeneration at the end of the nineteenth century (454). Much of this was associated with a concern that clear demarcations were being blurred. According to Eltis, this is what Dracula represents (455). The notion of purity of race merged in the Victorian mind with virginity of young women. Female virginity, chastity, and faithfulness meant a lot to Victorian England. It was seen as the main defining characteristic of Queen Victoria herself (Davis). Violation of a woman's purity associated with foreignness would have been anathema, a terror of the British and an insult to British manhood and womanhood both. In this way, the Count may represent a British fear of what Arata refers to as reverse colonization, or it may represent more generally a fear of change, of new blood.

It may be that the sexualization of Count Dracula and the act of vampirism served as a form of exploitation literature. The sexuality of the novel is intense and pervasive, but it exists under the immediate surface of a horror novel. Also, the novel contains a form of submissive ravishment, of rape. The threat and the domination and submission play to sexual fantasies of master and mistress, slave and submissive. I speculate that for the Victorian British, Dracula was a way of tapping into psychosexual issues, and perhaps a form of sexual stimulation. Jeffrey Spear claims to this end that Stoker himself was very much in favor of sexual restraint, and Dracula was in some ways an outlet for him. Spear writes: "Stoker demonstrated reticence to his own satisfaction and that of his

original audience by having his unvampirized characters speak of love and marriage rather than passion and by deflecting expressions of sexual desire into the world of the vampire” (181). It was possible through such deflection for Stoker, and perhaps others at the time, to have their cake and eat it too. Dracula, through its play with perversions, offered its readers a combination of thrills, action, excitement, and sexual stimulation as well; not for the purpose of pornography, but in the way that some forms of exploitation films do. It also creates a narrative outlet in which Stoker and his audience together can catch some glimpse of the dark side, sexuality beyond just closing their eyes and thinking of England.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

I have discussed the ways in which the novel shows the shortcomings of science and reasoning, documents, travel technologies, and the ways in which the use of magic, the occult, and sexuality challenge Victorian values. Dracula creates horror and suspense, but it does so as more than a novel about hunting a monster. The real horror of Dracula comes from the fact that he forces Victorians to confront the possibility of their own weakness, including the weaknesses of their ideals and their methods. The Western weapons of choice in the nineteenth century are not garlic and communion wafers, but guns, and guns cannot kill the Count. The Count cannot be understood through science or paperwork, and cannot be caught by trains, or recorded on phonographs. His image is not even captured by a mirror. He is a mist and a mystery, impossible to net, or to put in a formaldehyde jar on a shelf, or to pin to a board full of butterflies, lacquered in place with their eyes and wings fixed for permanent display; understood, and thereby truly conquered.

As the protagonists bring their nets down on Dracula, he escapes all the methods they have faith in. He forces them at every stage to resort to something they consider beneath them. Through vampirism, he forces them into an unchristian and intemperate sex act. In engaging him, the protagonists must give in to lore, superstition, and primitive transports and technologies. They must admit that their methods have failed, and they

must take off their kit gloves and face him on his terms, with blades and Bibles, regressing from Victorian to Medieval. In terms of sex, technology, transport, reasoning, and documentation, they must face a mirror empty except for their own images, and come to the conclusion that their perceptions of superiority are mere conceits.

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